



# JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND

JPAC FS-1

"Until they are home"

Fact Sheet

*The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command's mission is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts. JPAC personnel, along with other U.S. and foreign specialists, search for, recover and identify remains of Americans unaccounted-for from all conflicts from World War II through the Persian Gulf War. JPAC is organized into the following areas to get the job done:*

## ANALYSTS & INVESTIGATIVE TEAMS

- The search process begins with JPAC historians and analysts. These experts gather information from records, archives, interviews and other sources.



- Researchers create a 'loss incident case file' for each unaccounted-for individual. This file includes his-

torical background, military medical and personnel records, official correspondence, maps, photos, and other evidence. This groundwork lays the foundation that helps JPAC locate possible sites where American MIAs may be located.

- After this evidence and information is gathered, JPAC sends out an investigative team to these potential sites.
- Each team consists of four to nine people including a team leader, analyst, linguist, and medic. In some instances, an anthropologist, explosive ordnance disposal technician, and a life support technician augment the team.
- These teams survey potential recovery sites so that recovery teams have the most up-to-date information about a case prior to deployment. They also search for new leads that may result in future recoveries. Most importantly, investigative teams help determine if and when JPAC should send a recovery team to excavate a site.

## RECOVERY TEAMS

- Once the decision has been made to excavate a site, the next step is to send a JPAC recovery team.

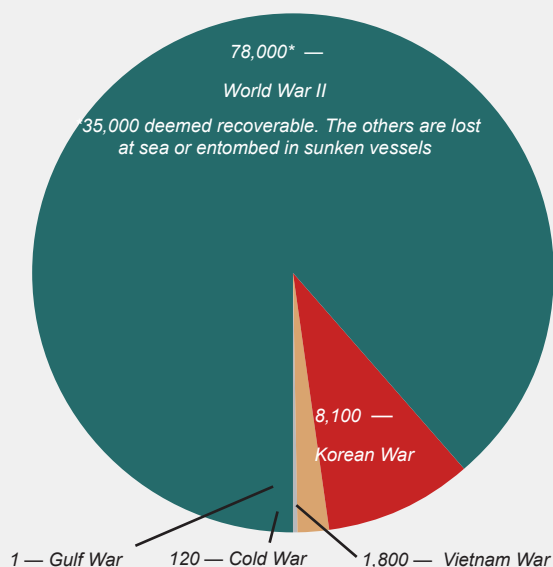
- JPAC has 18 recovery teams consisting of 10 to 14 people including a team leader, forensic anthropologist, team sergeant, linguist, medic, life support technician, forensic photographer, explosive ordnance disposal technician, and mortuary affairs specialists.



- Each year, JPAC conducts at least five recovery missions associated with the Korean War, ten missions in Southeast Asia for Vietnam War cases, and ten missions in other areas of the world to search for MIAs associated with World War II and the Cold War.

- Standard recovery missions last 35 to 60 days depending on the location, terrain, and recovery methods. Recovery

## HOW MANY ARE STILL MISSING?



teams use standard field archeology methods in the excavation as directed by the on-site anthropologist at each site.

- Recovery teams have to be in top physical condition to reach excavation sites, which often are in very remote places. Teams routinely have to walk through dense jungles, hike mountains and glaciers, and rappel down cliffs. Each team travels with up to 10,000 pounds in survival and excavation equipment.
- Most missions employ 10 to more than 100 local workers.

• Recovery sites can be as small as a few meters for individual burials to areas exceeding the size of a football field for aircraft crashes. Sites are sectioned into 4x4 grids for excavation.

• As a sign of respect, any remains that the teams find are placed in aluminum transfer cases and draped with a U.S. flag. An arrival ceremony is held in Hawaii with a joint service honor guard and senior military officers from each service.

• The remains and artifacts are then transported to the Central Identification Lab.

## CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY

• The CIL is staffed by more than 30 anthropologists and four forensic odontologists (dentists). JPAC has the largest staff of forensic anthropologists in the world.



• In the laboratory, anthropologists are responsible for the skeletal analysis of human remains and/or the analysis of material



evidence such as military uniforms, personal affects, and identification tags.

• While the CIL identifies about two Americans a week on average, the recovery and identification process may take years to complete. Approximately 74 POW/MIAs are identified, on average, per year.

• Once a case is completed, the identified American is transferred to the appropriate service mortuary affairs office. Military members from these offices then notify families personally of the identification.

## HISTORY

• In 1973, after the Vietnam War, the Central Identification Laboratory, Thailand (CIL-THAI) was established, focusing on the Americans still missing in Southeast Asia.

• In 1976, the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) was established to search for, recover, and identify missing Americans from all previous conflicts.

• In 1992, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) was established to focus on achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing as a result of the Vietnam War.

• In 2002, The Department of Defense (DoD) determined that POW/MIA accounting efforts would be best served by combining the two units and operating as one.

• On Oct. 1 2003, JPAC was formed with the merger of the 30-year-old U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) and the 11-year-old Joint Task Force – Full Accounting (JTF-FA).



*JPAC Public Affairs*  
310 Worcester Ave, Bldg 45  
Hickam AFB, HI 96853  
(808) 499-1936  
[public.affairs@jpac.pacom.mil](mailto:public.affairs@jpac.pacom.mil)  
[www.jpac.pacom.mil](http://www.jpac.pacom.mil)